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AUTHOR Bengtsson, Margot
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ABSTRACT

Empirical findings and theoretical conclusions of a Swedish study on students' identification with their parents and their choice of college studies are presented. Attention was directed to parental identification, parental dominance, and social class membership in a group of women who had just begun their studies during the fall 1976 term or the spring 1977 term. Fifty of the women students studied natural sciences, and 48 studied the arts. A structured interview method was employed that covered perception of sex-role and identity, problem-solving style, and psychological defensive structure. Depending on their self-assessed similarity to each parent, the women were classified in four categories: father-identified, mother-identified, mother- and father-identified, and undifferentiated. The analysis of the interview material indicated that the four categories basically reflected four different sets of family conditions, related to the parents' occupation, education, and social class, as well as their relative dominance and their respective decisionmaking competence. Women's educational choice is discussed as a manifestation of different personality strategies when confronted by male dominance, and education is discussed as a means of furthering efforts for women's emancipation. (SW)

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CONCLUDED PROJECT

TITLE OF PROJECT: PARENTAL IDENTIFICATION AND EDUCATION

CONDUCTED AT: The Department of Applied Psychology
University of Lund
S-223 50 LUND

Phone + 46 46 10 91 17

SCIENTIFIC LEADER: Ass. Prof. Alf Andersson

PROJECT LEADER: Margot Bengtsson, Ph.D.

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Parental identification, parental dominance and (social) class membership were investigated in a group of women who had just begun their studies during the autumn term of 1976 or the spring term of 1977, 50 of them taking natural sciences and 48 arts subjects. A structured interview method was employed. Depending on their self-assessed similarity to each parent, the women were classifed in four categories: father-identified (F), mother-identified (M), mother- and father-identified (MF) and undifferentiated (U). The analysis of the interview material indicated that the four categories basically reflected four different sets of family conditions, related to the parents' occupation, education and social class as well as their relative dominance and their respective decision-making competence.

Women's educational choice is discussed as a manifestation of different personality strategies when confronted by male dominance, and education is discussed as a means of furthering efforts for woman's emancipation.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical point of departure for this inquiry is derived from a model (Hefner et al., 1975) representing an elaboration of Piaget's theory of stages of cognitive development and Kohlberg's description of the development of psychological sexual identity on the same foundation. (Kohlberg, 1966.)

The novelty of Hefner's model compared with Kohlberg's is that a dialectic level is superimposed on the concrete-operational level where Kohlberg's model ends. Thus the development of sexual identity is described in three stages:

Stage I: Undifferentiated sexual identity in early childhood.
Stage II: Polarised sexual identity from age 6-7 until the teens.
Stage III: Identity transcending sex roles, from adolescence onwards.

Stage III implies a reconstruction of previous personality functions and facilitates a more independent personal choice of 'cognitive and emotional' strategy. This stage is also referred to as the dialectic level. The development of formal-operational thinking is a necessary but insufficient precondition for the development of Stage III. In principle there is no terminal point for this development.

The transition from Stage II to Stage III is described as particularly critical, because society with its sexual division of labour is constructed in such a way as to encourage adherence to polarised sexual identity. Consequently, where sexual identity is concerned, adolescence involves crises and, on the other hand, new opportunities of an independent development which is not possible in early childhood.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS

The questions underlying a classification into different parental identification categories are derived from the questionnaire used by Marke and Nyman 20 years ago in a survey of university students' parental identification in relation to 'neurosicism' (Marke & Nyman, 1963). The age and subject range of that study was the same

as in the group now investigated, except that whereas we only investigated women, Marke and Nyman investigated both sexes.

The questionnaire was converted into a structured interview, and in addition to parental identification, an investigation was also made of sex-role perception, identity perception, problem-solving style and psychological defensive structure.

The group investigated, numbering 50 women science students and 48 women art students, mainly comprised women who had come straight from upper secondary school and were taking science or arts subjects as their first and/or second subject at university or college in 1976/77. Most of them were aged between 19 and 24.

Since this is an extensive inquiry involving several different sub-problems and interim reports, most of which have also been presented in the form of Ph.D. theses (Bengtsson, 1983a), the present account will be confined to the problems and results relating to parental identification and education.

The very different ways in which parental identification is perceived by the women examined in this study suggest that the teens and adult years involve a considerable structural change in this respect. The great interindividual variation in parental identification (estimated similarity to parents) can be taken as indirect support for the assumption that access to formal-operative thinking in the teens facilitates a reconstruction of parental identification from the teens and into adult age. Our findings also support a historical premise, namely that concepts such as parental identification and sex roles are much more variously interpreted by 19- and 20-year-olds today than they were 20 years ago, as suggested by a comparison with Marke's and Nyman's findings (Marke & Nyman, 1963). As regards the content of parental identification, i.e. which (one or both) of their parents women believe themselves to resemble and in what respect, the analysis of their background, childhood, adolescence and current situation provides an indication of the importance of this point. Closer investigation of the background to differences of perceived parental identification yields a host of interesting results (Bengtsson, 1983b&d).

Parental identification, parental dominance and social class

(1) The findings show among other things that the *father-identified women* (F) are the daughters of full-time housewives. Practically all the full-time housewives in the group appear in the father-identified category. There are more full-time housewives in this category than all the other three categories put together. This also is the category with the greatest inter-parental discrepancy of education and occupation, i.e. the father is often well-educated and/or has a high-status job, while the mother has little education and often no direct vocational education at all. More exactly, what has happened is that fathers have made careers for themselves in private enterprise or banking, while the mothers have attended to the 'reproductive chores' of the family. In these families there has been a powerful assymetrical, gender based relation between parents as regards education and occupation. In addition, the mother has been regarded by her daughters as economically and personally subordinate to the father. This assymetry is also reflected by the parental *childrearing philosophy* as perceived by the daughters. The latter have regarded their fathers as quite strict and their mothers as lenient. This type of family resembles closely the classical bourgeois family which is the point of departure of practically all psychological theory (particularly psychoanalysis) but also of modern socialisation research (cf. Holter et al., 1975). The interesting point about the present study is that this classical bourgeois family type is not the most dominant type of family even in those strata of the survey which can be termed upper-class or professional/managerial stratum, i.e. social categories associated with upper-class lifestyles, and also that women in this category identify themselves so unequivocally with their fathers.

(2) Instead the most dominant type of family in upper-class or professional/managerial strata as represented in this survey can be described as follows. *Both* parents are well-educated and have high-status occupations, viz those of doctor, dentist, graduate engineer, lawyer, graduate economist, university fellow or lecturer, and upper secondary school teacher. This is the category in the survey whose mothers are best educated and which

has the smallest proportion of full-time housewives. It is from this category that the group of women come who reply 'both, don't know or neither' when asked which of their parents they resemble most, i.e. the group I have termed *Undifferentiated* (U) with respect to parental identification. I take this to mean that, unlike the 'traditional' bourgeois family in which sex is a powerful differentiating factor with regard to education, occupation, upbringing etc., the 'modern' upper-class or the top positions of the professional/managerial stratum reject or no longer recognise sex as a differentiating factor with regard to education, occupation, occupation ideology or even identification. On the other hand it is apparent, for example as a result of parental supremacy being quaranteed all the time through education, occupation and, accordingly, in the family, that this is partly a mystification and that a modified, patriachal type of family is preserved albeit covertly. Putting it more concretely, if the father is a physician, the mother will be an upper secondary school teacher; if the father is a surgeon, the mother will be a psychiatrist; if the father is a Ph.D., the mother will be a M.A. or B.A., and so on. In other words, even if both parents are highly educated and have prestigious occupations, in the group as a whole the father will still have slightly superior education and professional status compared with the mother and the mother will be regarded by her daughters as subordinate to the father, just as in the traditional bourgeois families. *As regards child rearing philosophy, on the other hand*, women in this category refuse to make any distinction between their parents. They feel that their parents have shared the same child rearing philosophy and that both parents have devoted (or failed to devote) equal amounts of time to them during their formative years.

(3) In this latter respect, i.e. child rearing philosophy, this type of family from the upper-class or professional/managerial strata resembles what I would tentatively term the 'modern' working-class and typically middle strata families represented in the survey. In these social strata too, women maintain that their parents shared very much the same child rearing philosophy. It is also in these last mentioned social strata, i.e. the working class, lower middle strata and middle strata, that the most *substantial*

equality appears to exist between parents as regards both education, occupation and even personal dominance in the home. Parents in these strata have often received education of the same duration or brevity within or outside the school system. They often have identical occupations, e.g. both are industrial workers, junior salaried employees or elementary school teachers, or if they have different occupations the paternal occupations will be at an intermediate level in the private sector and maternal occupations at the same level in the public sector. One is struck by the much better position occupied by the *mother* in relation to the father in these families according to the daughters' views, as compared with families from upper-class or professional/ managerial strata. The mother is considered at least as dominant as the father in many respects, sometimes even more so. It is from these social strata, i.e. working class, lower middle strata and middle strata, that the women come who identified themselves with the mother in certain respects and with the father in others, i.e. *mother- and father-identified* (MF).

(4) The fourth type of family which is clearly and unequivocally represented in this survey I would tentatively term 'traditional' working class, as distinct from the 'modern' working class family I described in the preceding section. This category comprises families in which the father has the most 'proletarian' occupation, i.e. manual work in industry, no education over and above elementary school and a weak, subordinate position in the family in the daughers' experience, whereas the mother appears to be the most dominant personality in all respects. These families are almost the exact reverse of relations in the traditional bourgeois families. The strong mothers in this type of working-class family are the counterparts of the strong fathers in the bourgeois categories. The strong position of mothers in these families has material foundations resembling those of the paternal position in the bourgeois categories. In other words, the mothers in these working-class families are better educated than the fathers and have what can be termed typical middle-strata occupations,

e.g. the father may be an industrial worker whose education is limited to elementary schooling, while the mother is a secretary who has attended junior secondary school and received vocational education or, as is also common, the father may be an industrial worker while the mother is a practical nurse, State-registered nurse or pre-school teacher. This 'reversal' or roles between the parents is also reflected in their *childrearing ideology* as interpreted by their daughters; in other words, the mother is considered quite strict and the father quite lenient, which is the opposite of the traditional bourgeois type of family which we began by describing and in which the daughters identify exclusively with the father. In these maternally dominated working-class families, the daughters identify exclusively with the *mother* instead. The exclusively *mother-identified* (M) women in this survey come from maternally dominated working-class families. In the traditional sociological classification, these families are defined as working class, classification being usually based on the father's occupation. But the mother in these families belongs to the middle strata. The generally high employment participation rate of women in Sweden probably means that classification solely with reference to paternal occupation is no longer feasible.

Taking the group as a whole, i.e. if we also include mother- and father-identified as well as undifferentiated subjects, one finds that *the closer the working-class link, the more powerful mother-identification will be, and the closer the middle-strata or upper-class or professional/managerial strata link, the weaker mother-identification will be*, in spite of mothers in the category defined here as undifferentiated in terms of parental identification being better educated and having high-status occupations. The essential factor seems to be, not the view taken of the mother or father individually but the *inter-parental relationship*.

Parental identification - a relational concept?

The striking point about parental identification is that it is the *relationship* between their parents which the interviewees more or less consciously appraised, rather than one or other parent individually. When there is a great power discrepancy between parents, as with the

parental relations observed by the father- or mother-identified groups respectively, there appears to be a strong predisposition to identify with the parent wielding 'power', which in these particular cases means financial control, education, dominance and decision-making competence. Obviously this is *one* important factor underlying the strong father-identification of the F-group.

It is uncertain whether the strong position of M-mothers in the family is due entirely to their having financial control and educational resources or whether their powerful position is also due to the families concerned having working-class fathers and what would appear to be a clear division of roles between parents. This inter-parental division of roles is perhaps one reason why mothers are able to combine higher education and middle-class occupations. As long as the mother's education and occupation are located in the 'female' sphere, perhaps the father's 'manliness' still remains unassailed. Several interviewees in this group indicate that they associate education with 'womanliness' but physical work with 'manliness'. Empirical surveys have shown values of this kind to be common among both the American and British working classes (Willis, 1977). Similar conceptions are reported to occur in Sweden, viz among low-achieving working-class boys (Wernersson, 1982).

The case of the U- and MF-groups, the division of roles and the power discrepancy between parents appear to be less pronounced. Substantial equality of the sexes appears to be greatest in the MF-group between parents as regards education, finance and occupation. But it still seems as though parents are acknowledged to have had partly different roles in connection with child-rearing, with the mother providing the care even though she was gainfully employed and the father supplying the values of working life. The women consider themselves intellectually most similar to the mother (which they regret). Where this group is concerned, the division of labour between parents is evidently bound up with a perception of intellectual differences between them.

The U-group employes the response strategy of denying sexually related differences between parents. This strategy is rendered

comprehensible by the family situation of the group. Both parents, but especially the father, occupy top positions among the professional/ managerial strata. Both parents, and especially the father, are highly educated and both have made careers for themselves, mainly on the strength of their education. At the same time as gender related differences between parents are denied, the 'individualisation tendency' is most powerful in this group, i.e. these interviewees state more often than others that they are unaffected by anybody, 'nobody' has influenced their upbringing. They 'themselves' have determined their education, they wish to resemble 'neither' of their parents and so on. I take these answers to imply that this group denies with particular vehemence that sex or parents mean anything. The significant, all-over-shadowing factor is the achievements and capacity of the *individual* (regardless of sex), and even parents can have an inhibiting effect here. The fact that the interviewees then, for all their denial of parental influence on educational choice, for example, opt for the same education as their parents merely serves to show that the powerful individualisation tendency presumably passed on by this group of parents to their children is the best guarantee of children reproducing exactly what their parents want, i.e. doing their utmost to achieve the same positions in education and employment as their parents. This group has identified itself with parents' position in society rather than with parents as persons, since identification with parents as *persons* is no guarantee of one's being able to reproduce their social position.

Women's educational choice - an expression of different personality strategies when confronted by male dominance?

The differences displayed by the women examined here with respect to parental identification could be taken as a manifestation of women's changed personality strategies in response to male dominance.

The attitude of the U-group could be taken to express a powerful *equal opportunities ideology*, i.e. a denial of the legitimacy of gender based differentiation in any respect. The equal opportunities ideology appears compatible with *a gender neutral 'rationality'* as regards attitudes to educational and occupational choice.

A 'rationality' of this kind, denying for example that sex can have any effect whatsoever on the choice of subject, educational achievement, vocational choice and so on, doubtless confers an advantage when penetrating subject fields and areas of achievement previously reserved for men, as indeed is more the case with the U-group's choice of science subjects than with the choice of arts, i.e. traditional 'woman's' subjects by the M- and MF-groups. It will be interesting to see whether this 'rationality' among U-group women is endorsed by men in these strata. If so, this means that individual competition, achievement and success in certain strata, recruited from the top positions of the professional/managerial strata and/or upper-class, are no longer as closely bound up with sex, i.e. masculinity, as in the classical bourgeois family, where all these things are closely associated with male sexual identity.

But what is the view taken of womanliness and manliness respectively in these strata? How do relationships between the sexes operate? I believe that Hanne Haavind's description of 'positive' and 'negative' womanliness and manliness respectively tally best with the form of interaction between the sexes in these social strata.

Haavind (1980) argues that 'womanliness' and 'manliness' are to be regarded as relational concepts. Womanliness, she says, is no characteristic in its own right; the concept merely expresses a relation. The nature of womanliness can only be defined by reference to manliness.

Haavind believes the content of the womanliness concept to have changed during the 1970s, in such a way that it has become legitimate for women to do everything men do as long as they remain subordinate to the power and dominance of men; women are welcome to be intelligent and logical, so long as men are more intelligent and logical; women are welcome to be dominant, so long as men are more dominant, and so on. *Women can do everything as long as they do it in a position of relative subordination to men.* Hanne Haavind uses the term 'positive' womanliness to represent this shift in the content of the womanliness concept. She believes that an ideological change can be discerned in society, from a legitimisation of oppression of women to the development of various

techniques of concealing the oppression of women. In many circles it is no longer considered positively womanly to subject oneself to a man by being passive, helpless, dependent and so on in relation to him. But visible rebellion and protest are still regarded as womanly in a 'negative' sense. 'Positive' womanliness, therefore, means devising an attitude towards men which implies subordination while at the same time concealing the fact. The essence of 'positive' womanliness is to make inequality look like equality. 'Positive' manliness, similarly, is an attitude which men develop to preserve their power and superiority in relation to women while at the same time concealing the fact. This 'positive' stance implies, according to Haavind, that the individual works to achieve such an attitude and that men and women together help to establish such relations and experience them as mutually confirming (Haavind, 1980).

My assumption, in the light of our findings, is that the form of relationship between the sexes described by Haavind is typical of inter-parental relations in the type of family from which the U-group women are recruited and also typical of the relationship between the sexes more generally in this social stratum. This form of relationship between the sexes makes it easier for women, for example, to choose education and occupations previously regarded as masculine, e.g. medicine or veterinary medicine, but at the same time it involves women in qualitatively different problems of subordination in relation to men from those existing when men and women are referred to different fields of responsibility as regards education and occupation, a state of affairs defined as the 'differentiated gender ideology' (Liljeström, 1981).

The women in the MF-group express more of a differentiated gender ideology, reflecting among other things by their choice of subjects in the 'female sphere' but also by the reasons for their choice; intellectually they resemble their mothers most. This group, evidently, still associates masculinity with an intellectual bent for technology, economics and mathematics and femininity with an intellectual bent for languages, care an so forth, and according to 'the ideology of gender differences' these intellectual dispositions appear to be mutually exclusive. The more powerful differentiated gender ideology in this group may in turn be a result of its members having been recruited from a lower middle strata closely allied with the working class.

According to unanimous findings (Ve, 1977, Prokop, 1982), the working class family structure tends rather to be 'parallel', in the sense of retaining the division into sectors having specific sex roles, with little communication between them. Women make relatively autonomous decisions within their field, men within theirs. But the differentiated gender ideology of the MF-group tends to be more 'interactive', with little division into sexually specific fields but with women retaining prime responsibility in the liberal arts/care sphere and men doing the same in technology/ science. This form of interaction, unlike the parallel set-up, presupposes some degree of identification (though not complete identification) with the male sphere, manifested in the women belonging to this group by a combined mother- and father-identification and possibly by the converse for men, i.e. identification with the female sphere, manifested either in the same way (through a combination of father- and mother-identification) or in some other way which remains to be investigated. *Thus parental identification, above all in the MF- and U-groups, could be taken to reflect new personality strategies in response to male dominance, which in turn reflects a form of interaction (relation) between the sexes which is partly different from that occurring in the traditional family.* It is above all among individuals recruited from intermediate strata that this potential for change appears to dominate, at least in the present survey. But the strategies vary distinctly, depending on whether the interviewees are recruited from the professional/ managerial strata, as with most people in the U-group, or from middle or lower middle strata which is in various respects similar to the working class, as is the case with most interviewees in the MF-group.

Hypothetically speaking, then, the U- and MF-groups would seem to be the groups who give the most powerful expression of a new 'positive' view of femininity, conveyed in the case of the U-group through a strong individualisation ideology (it is the individual that counts, not sex) and in the case of the MF-group is rather an 'androgynous' ideology, i.e. acknowledgement of 'masculine' traits inherited from their fathers, though not including those connected with power, viz a bent for technology and economics, and acknowledgement of 'feminine' traits inherited from their mothers, namely those which are concerned with care, imagination and the lack of power.

The personality strategy of the F-group, on the other hand, unlike the personality strategies of the MF- and U-groups, could be termed 'negatively feminine' according to Hanne Haavind's conceptual frame, i.e. a protest against the subjection of women to male dominance. The F-group also comes from a type of family where the assymetry of power between parents has been most distinct and to the father's advantage. The women in the F-group have closely identified themselves with their scientifically schooled fathers and have chosen to study science subjects at university, with encouragement from their fathers.

Age variations in parental identification - age-specific personality strategies in response to male dominance?

The personality strategy of the M-group is interesting in many ways. This is the only group of women coming from a type of family where the mother was clearly dominant in relation to the father in central respects, i.e. in terms of finance, education, personal dominance and so on. This is also the only group reporting clear maternal orientation at all the ages inquired about, viz 6 years, 10 years, 16 years and adult age. The other groups report variable, age-related orientation towards their parents. Thus the MF-group state that at ages 6 and 10 they were above all orientated towards their fathers, and that this changed in their teens, when they began to orientate towards their mothers. These perceived changes of orientation towards parents at different ages could also be interpreted as age-specific personality strategies in response to male dominance. By the time they are three years old, children have already realised which sex they belong to, but they are uncertain as to what this implies. At the age of four children develop the view that the sex to which they themselves belong is 'best' while the other sex is 'silly and bad'. But between the ages of 5 and 8, children of both sexes develop the view that the male sex is associated with superior authority and the female sex with subordination. It is also at this age that children of both sexes achieve constant perception of sexual differences and concepts of the sex roles (Kohlberg, 1966, Kohlberg & Zigler, 1966).

How does the girl react to this fact of femininity being subordinate at the same time as she realises that she belongs to an unchangeable sexual category? This is the question asked by a Danish psychologist, Eva Ethelberg, in relation to various psychological theories concerning

the development of psychological female and male identity (Ethelberg, 1983). None of the existing psychological theories, she argues, asks or answers this question. She feels, however, that it ought to be possible for some answers to be formulated on the basis of cognitive developmental psychology, even though the representatives of this school have neither asked the questions nor given the answers (Kohlberg, 1966).

Viewed in the context of cognitive developmental theory, this problem is bound to lead to an internal contradiction between the girl's perception of reality (sex is a constant, unchanging reality, but femininity is subordinate to masculinity) and on the other hand the girl's self-respect (I view myself in a positive light, but I am of the female sex). This contradiction Ethelberg maintains, points to an internal conflict which can cause male dominance and the personal development of women to be interlinked.

Thus there is a manifest conflict between the girl's perception of reality, i.e. gender constancy, male dominance and societal oppression of women, and her self-respect. Ethelberg discerns three essential ways of resolving this conflict between perceived reality and self-respect.

1. The first strategy is for the girl to choose to retain her positive self-evaluation, but in this case she will have to 'sublimate', i.e. internally and interpersonally conceal male dominance. In this case she opts for self-respect at the expense of an area of her perception of reality, with the result that her self-respect becomes unrealistic.

2. If the second strategy she chooses instead to preserve her perception of reality, but in this case she has to relinquish her self-valuation. As a result she feels herself substantially inferior.

3. The third strategy involves preserving the contradiction between perception of reality (I am a girl, I belong to the female sex, female is subordinate to male) and self-valuation

(I am good). This entails a logical inconsistency and an emergency solution, according to Ethelberg, may be for the girl as it were to withdraw from the category of women - 'I am not like them' - until she has developed an alternative valuative image in her personality. She will probably copy male dominance.

Ethelberg presumes that the girl's choice of personality strategy will depend on her family circumstances. She mentions overt or covert male dominance in the family as a decisive factor. Overt male dominance is taken to be conducive to personality strategy 2 or 3, since the reality (male dominance) is unambiguous, while covert male dominance in the family would favourise the first personality strategy. I believe the personality strategies described here to be possible explanations for the age-related changes in parental orientation reported by the women science and arts students, and also for their parental identification as perceived now in adult years. Two groups come from family types with wholly or partly concealed male dominance, viz the MF-group and the U-group. As stated earlier, the MF-group report that when they were 6 and 10 years old they related mostly to their fathers, but that at age 16 they oriented towards their mothers. Paternal orientation in the lower age groups is described by Kohlberg as typical of girls in his surveys (Kohlberg, 1966). According to Kohlberg (1966), children of both sexes orientate towards the father as from the age of 5-8 years. This leads him to conclude that girls' sexual identification is based more on identification with the complementary paternal role than is the case with boys. The boys define their masculinity with competitive skills and by acceptance in male groups, while girls define their femininity in terms of acceptance by men. It seems as though the women in the MF-group retain their positive self-valuation until their teens by relating principally to their fathers, a strategy, however, which they abandoned during their teens (Bengtsson, 1983b&d). When abandoning this strategy they choose to view their mothers more positively instead of viewing themselves more negatively or challenging male dominance. Thus from the teens onwards, there occurs a drastic up-valuation of the mother in relation to the father on the part of this group at the same time as they begin orientating mostly towards the mother and identifying themselves with her. In this way they appear able to preserve a positive self-valuation without needing to question male dominace. The U-group adopts a still more radical strategy in

order to salvage its positive self-valuation. The members of this group detach themselves from both parents and thereby from the whole interparental problem of dominance and gender, and instead they invest heavily in themselves. Individualising the entire set of problems, they are spared having to query male dominance, because it is the individual, not sex, that counts.

Unlike the MF- and U-groups, the F-group comes from a type of family with overt male dominance. Like the MF-group, the members of this group orientate mainly towards their fathers at age 10, but unlike the MF-group, they do not relinquish their paternal orientation in their teens but retain it and identify with their fathers. And instead of up-valuing their mothers like the MF-group, the members of the F-group appear to resolve the dilemma of self-valuation and perception of reality partly by arguing as if they did not really belong to the category of women; they identify closely with their fathers, a strategy in line with the third personality strategy described by Ethelberg.

As stated earlier, the M-group is the only one not stating any changes in parental orientation. The members of this group state that at all ages, viz, 6, 10, 16 and adulthood, they were mainly mother-oriented. They also come from a type of family in which the mother has been clearly dominant. One assumption is that they do not really need to tackle the contradiction between adjustment to reality and self-valuation until their teens or adulthood, since their mothers were so clearly dominant and they themselves, like their mothers, are of the female sex. If they do not need to tackle the conflict until their teens, they are in a completely different position to cope with it, unlike the girl aged between 5 and 8, they have access to formal operative and dialectically constructive cognitive functioning. They are in a position to adopt an abstract, analytical and questioning attitude towards social norms and values, a strategy which is beyond the reach of a girl between the ages of 5 and 8.

The greatest danger to children aged between 5 and 8 is that of losing their self-respect or having their self-confidence undermined (Andersson & Bengtsson, 1983). One way in which the child can avoid

threats of this kind is by developing different types of psychological defensive strategies. The logical inconsistency between perception of reality (gender constancy, male dominance) and self-valuation to which the girl is subjected between the ages of 5 and 8 is in itself liable to cause neurosis, since at this age the girl does not have the cognitive developmental potential for handling such a contradiction. She does, however, acquire this potential from her teens onwards. The girl's ability to deal with the above mentioned conflict in a more genuine manner will depend partly on the extent to which she is capable of articulating the conflict. If the conflict is 'neuroticised', this will be partly because it was impossible for the girl to resolve and she was therefore obliged to 'sublimate' all or part of it.

One assumption to be made on the strength of our findings and the models presented, then, is that the women examined here have developed different personality strategies in response to male dominance, depending on the type of family from which they come as regards paternal dominance and decision-making competence in relation to the mother and as regards the age at which they have had to decide their own personal standpoint in relation to male dominance. They express these differing personlity strategies in response to male dominance most clearly through their perceived parental identification and the changes of parental orientation which they experienced when they were 6, 10, 16 years old and in adult years. The extent to which women in their teens or as adults are capable of articulating and processing their personality strategies depends on themselves, their background and their present situation.

The situation facing the women examined here is that they have chosen their path of higher education, the F- and U-groups opting mainly for science subjects and the M- and MF-groups mainly opting for arts subjects. What is the significance of their choices when viewed in a broader perspective?

Education as a means of female emancipation

Education has traditionally been regarded as a means of emancipation exclusively for bourgeois women. 'The housemaids of the 19th century had little to gain from the emancipatory reforms conferring rights

of inheritance, enterprise and high school education on the young ladies of the upper classes' (Liljeström, 1981, p. 245). But we have today an educational society in which gender and class differentiation to a great extent takes place through the educational system rather than outside it (Lundberg et al., 1976). Ekehammar and Löfgren (1981) show that it was still uncommon in the early 1960s for working-class women to enter university. The same is also apparent from the study by Marke and Nyman (1963) mentioned at the beginning of this report. Women in that study recruited almost exclusively from 'social class 1'. Researchers in the 1960s regarded higher education recruitment mainly as a process of class selection, while selection within the higher education system was mainly a process of sexual selection, a choice between men and women recruited from upper-class and middle strata (Gesser, 1967, Swärt et al., 1968). This situation has changed drastically.

From 1976/77 onwards, Ekehammar and Löfgren show that both sex and class problems have, so to speak, been transferred to post-secondary level. Working-class women are tending more often to go on to higher studies, as the present survey confirms. In 1976/77, the year of this study, they comprised, according to Ekehammar and Löfgren about half of all women students and the category whose share of post-secondary students was increasing most. But if the results of our study are representative of a general body of women opting for higher education, the women recruited from the working-class and lower middle strata opt for different subjects and education programmes than women from the upper-class or professional/managerial strata. The latter display less sexual bias in their educational choice. They have tended to a greater extent to enter 'male' studies and occupational spheres, as suggested by the choices made by the F- and U-groups in this survey. 'Male' spheres are not entered indiscriminately, however. The main focus is on studies and occupations where education guarantees a future professional position, i.e. jobs in the public sector such as those of doctor, dentist and veterinary surgeon (Ekehammar & Löfgren, 1981). Women now make up roughly half or even two-thirds (veterinary studies) of all the students going in for these studies, which two decades ago were clearly dominated by men. On the other hand women have made little headway in technical and scientific studies (Ekehammar & Löfgren, 1981). It is definitely not a coincidence.

These occupational spheres are more closely linked to private enterprise and women with these qualifications have had a great deal of difficulty in obtaining appropriate positions (Asplund, 1982). Education here is still no dependable guarantee of employment position. What is more, these studies and occupations are quite contrary to the traditional female 'resonsibility rationale', unlike such professions as medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine. In this study at least, working-class and lower-middle-strata women display more sexual bias in their choices. In her book 'Arbetarkvinnor', Rita Liljeström describes a line of development among working-class women from servant girl to housemaid and from housemaid to housewife and finally from full-time housewife to one of the care professions. As she sees it, this line of development captures a typical feature of working-class women in various decades (Liljeström & Dahlström, 1981).

The women in this study who come from the working class (in the broad and narrow sense), i.e. the women in the MF- and M-groups, have mainly chosen subjects and study programmes in the 'feminine' sphere of the liberal arts, but they have also as in biology - though not medicine - for example in sciences. These choices lead (at best) to the teaching profession, which is a typical middle-strata position. The mothers of these women usually have care occupations of one kind or another, e.g. paramedical jobs in hospitals, child care or geriatric care, as is mostly the case with MF-group mothers, or else jobs as practical nurses, nurses or pre-school teachers, which is above all the case with M-group mothers. Through the line of development described by Rita Liljeström, one could thus add a university-based 'female' occupation, which in terms of class implies a shift of position from the lower intermediate stratum closely allied to the working-class (working-class in the broad sense) to a more specifically middle-strata position, but in terms of sexual status this does not represent any major inflection. The tradition of working with people and/or the feminine 'responsibility rationale' appears to be intact.

Margot Bengtsson

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